

Mr. Les Whitten
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9/8/77

Dear Les,

If this morning's good column and the companion Post story suggest some official had an interest, this is not why I write. Nor about the coincidence with the story I heard but did not read, of a grand jury calling as a witness one of the IPS moneybags.

Rather is it about a basic approach suggested in part of my enclosed letter to Steve Bell.

I have not followed the Letelier case closely. I have read all the Post has carried, including the column.

There may be much I do not know. Probably very much.

But on the basis of what I recall of what I've read and heard if I were going to be spending any time looking into this case I'd first want to know what the FBI will not in all likelihood be anxious to disclose:

What detonated the explosive, what explosive was used and if there was any way of tracing it.

I presume that the lab work was done by the FBI and that the DC police have it as an unsolved case whether or not the FBI exercised any federal jurisdiction, as under the Civil Rights Act. From what I've seen of FBI lab reports they are minimal, evasive and uninformative, stating general conclusions that mean nothing without the testimony of the lab agents. Those who testify are experts in not telling prosecutors what they do not want them to know. No matter what they do they are lame, the prosecutor not prosecuting the prosecutor.

As I recall the initial stories there was a careful search of the crime scene. I suspect that one of the purposes was to determine if part of a detonating mechanism remained. Like parts of a radio. Or a clock or watch.

I have not kept tabs on the method of operation of the various extremist Cubans but I recall no training by our spooks that required the use of either device nor do I recall any subsequent bombing, of which there were many, in which extremist Cubans used such devices to detonate. I could be quite wrong on this. I'm repeating only what I recall.

The Miami police might be a good source on how these Cubans prefer to bomb. These police have had much experience from many bombings. (I don't know either Gerstein or his investigator, Dardis. Bud used to be friends there but may not be now from a case he is handling.)

Revanchist Cubans are logically suspect for many reasons but so are others. The content of the column is quite reasonable but it does not represent anything that can be taken to court. I'd believe this even more if it was fed or leaked to you.

This case reminds me of one in which I tried without success to interest some IPS people, a bombing in Maryland, I think Harford County, in the Rap Brown case. If anyone wanted to follow that one I think the FBI cannot withhold because there was a de facto waiver in the release of Hoover's telegram to the State Police paraphrasing the lab analysis. And I've already established that there is no secrecy on such lab work. In the Letelier case there was no such waiver of which I'm aware and it is an ongoing investigation, which is an exemption under FOIA.

I'm certain that any real investigation of the Brown case, in which a District black man named Featherstone was killed, will establish that the official account is false. It is that they were transporting a bomb that just went off on them.

Best,